

## **Advanced Clinic Access**

### **What is Advanced Clinic Access?**

It is a process aimed at reducing wait times and improving your access to quality health care.

**What is Open Access Scheduling?** It means you can get an appointment without a long delay. The goal is for you to be able to see your primary care provider within one to two business days and for you to have faster access to specialty care.

### **Why have Open Access?**

Under the old system, appointments might be scheduled so far in advance that patients would forget and miss them. It's costly when patients miss their appointments and it prevents us from giving that time slot to another veteran.

### **How does this affect you?**

Open access scheduling will help you contact your provider more quickly. Access within one or two business days is usually available with your primary care provider or another provider on the team. You should be able to see a specialist within a month.

### **Does it change the way I get medications?**

No! Just be sure to request refills at least 15 days before your medications run out.

## **4 Easy Steps to Open Access Scheduling**

1. During your appointment, your provider will discuss a date for a follow-up visit.
2. Before you leave the clinic, stop by the checkout desk to get your instructions from the Medical Support Assistant (MSA).
3. Tell the MSA if you need a reminder or "time to call" letter for your next appointment. A couple of weeks before your provider wants to see you again; you will get a letter telling you to call to make your appointment. Please do not report to the clinic. **This letter is only to remind you that it's time to give us a call.**

4. Call your clinic when it is time to make your appointment.

### **How You Can Help**

- Call and cancel if you cannot keep a scheduled appointment. Make room for a fellow veteran.
- If you need a reminder to schedule your next appointment, ask the MSA to send you a “time to call” letter, before you leave the clinic.
- Call and make your appointment with your provider within the time frame that s/he requested. Please be sure to ask if you need lab work or x-rays before your visit.
- Report to the clinic 30 minutes before your scheduled appointment. This will give you enough time to review your health promotion activities with the nurse and for you to get ready for your appointment with your provider. This helps your provider stay on schedule for you and other veterans on the schedule that day.
- Keep a list of all your medications; include new medications from your private doctor. Bring your medication list to your clinic appointment.
- Use the mail-in prescription program for all medications. This will save you time and money.

### **Your Health Care Team:**

**Primary Care Provider:** A doctor, physician’s assistant or nurse practitioner that manages your overall health care with you.

**Registered Nurse (RN) Team Leader:** Helps you meet your health care goals through coordination, care management and education.

**Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) or Health Tech:** Checks you in for your appointment, reviews your health promotion activities, and tells you about any tests you may be having.

**Medical Support Assistant (MSA):** Greets you at the front desk and tells the nurse and/or provider that you are here. S/he also sets up appointments and processes your provider's orders.

**Clinic Pharmacist:** Provides education on medications and processes your prescriptions.

**Clinic Dietitian:** Tells you about special diets for weight management, diabetes, or other nutritional needs.

Content approval: Primary Care PSL and Specialty Care PSL  
May 2005

VA Medical Center  
Minneapolis, Minnesota